

Employment Services in Supportive Housing

participant materials
supportive housing training series

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Participant Materials

Developed by Center for Urban Community Services

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Employment Services in Supportive Housing is part of the Supportive Housing Training Series. This training series currently includes eleven curricula providing best practices and guidance on supportive housing development, operation and services.

The full series is available for downloading from the Department of Housing and Urban Development website.

For more information:

U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development: www.hud.gov

Center for Urban Community Services: www.cucs.org

Corporation for Supportive Housing: www.csh.org

AGENDA

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EMPLOYMENT SUPPORT SERVICES

EMPLOYMENT SUPPORT SERVICES ARE PROVIDED IN ORDER TO:

- Help individual tenants make progress toward employment goals and career objectives
- Give motivational support and any extra help that an individual may need to get and keep a job
- Assist tenants to identify strengths, skills and limitations
- Help re-integrate people into the community

TYPE OF SUPPORTS PROVIDED INCLUDE:

- Developing a career plan
- Generating and sustaining the motivation to become employed
- Developing a resume and/or completing job applications
- Preparing for a job interview
- Discussing how to respond to personal questions
- Discussing issues of self-disclosure regarding a disability
- Offering pre- and post-employment support groups
- Arranging access to education/job training
- Discussing work-appropriate grooming and attire
- Arranging for child care
- Recognizing successes
- Supporting people through setbacks
- Budgeting a paycheck
- Teaching stress management and conflict-resolution skills
- Networking and job resources

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| <h2 style="margin: 0;">VOCATIONAL SERVICES PLANNING WORKSHEET</h2> <h3 style="margin: 0;">MENU OF SERVICES AVAILABLE TO RESIDENTS</h3> |
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Indicate which services will be available to residents. Determine if these services will be provided "On-Site" or "Off-Site" and who will provide the services.

| I. CONSIDERING EMPLOYMENT | On-Site | Off-Site |
|--|----------------|-----------------|
| a. Case management or service coordination | | |
| b. Groups | | |
| c. Individualized service planning | | |
| d. Individual counseling and support | | |
| e. Employment Research | | |
| f. Support groups | | |
| g. Other | | |
| | | |

| II. PRE-VOCATIONAL SERVICES | On-Site | Off-Site |
|---|----------------|-----------------|
| a. Communication skills | | |
| b. Assessment | | |
| c. Training conflict resolution/interpersonal skills training | | |
| d. Personal financial management and budgeting | | |
| e. Reviewing appropriate dress and workplace behavior | | |
| f. Interviewing skills building | | |
| g. Entitlement assistance/benefits counseling | | |
| h. Building hope and motivation | | |
| i. Training in personal hygiene and self-care | | |
| j. Supporting participants through setbacks | | |
| k. Training in use of public transportation | | |
| l. Assistance with activities of daily living | | |
| m. Referrals to other services and programs | | |
| n. Stipend program | | |
| o. Opportunities for residents to volunteer | | |
| p. Literacy program/ ESL, GED | | |
| q. Other | | |
| | | |

| III. EMPLOYMENT TRAINING |
|-----------------------------------|
| a. Develop job-specific skills |
| b. Groups |
| c. Meet with vocational counselor |
| d. Soft skill training |
| e. Job readiness training |
| f. Other |
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| On-Site | Off-Site |
|----------------|-----------------|
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| IV. TRANSITIONAL EMPLOYMENT |
|--|
| a. Time limited employment |
| b. Follow along support by vocational worker |
| c. Address skill gaps |
| d. Support groups |
| e. Other |
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| On-Site | Off-Site |
|----------------|-----------------|
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| V. JOB PLACEMENT |
|--|
| a. Learn job-seeking skills |
| b. Assistance with resume and cover letter writing |
| c. Interview skills training |
| d. Job coaching |
| e. Job development |
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| On-Site | Off-Site |
|----------------|-----------------|
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| VI. COMPETITIVE/PERMANENT/GAINFUL WORK |
|---|
| a. Full-time employment |
| b. Part-time employment |
| c. Job development |
| d. Job coaching |
| e. Follow along support by vocational worker |
| f. On-site employment (describe): |
| g. Opportunities for tenants to volunteer |
| h. Other vocational services (specify): |
| |

| On-Site | Off-Site |
|----------------|-----------------|
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Notes: _____

CAREER COUNSELING

Career counseling includes an assessment in a variety of areas. Of course, an individual's career plan can and often does change as a function of experience and motivation. Nevertheless, discussing the future and a possible career path is likely to provide helpful insights.

AREAS TO INCLUDE IN A CAREER-COUNSELING ASSESSMENT:

- Education and work history
- Level of motivation
- Strengths and skills
- Short-term employment preferences
- Long-term career goals
- Potential obstacles, limitations and disincentives (such as physical constraints, entitlement and benefit issues)
- History of how special needs have affected employment

A CAREER-COUNSELING PROCESS SHOULD EVENTUATE IN A CAREER PLAN. THIS PLAN WOULD:

- Identify a clear starting point to advance toward personal goals
- Delineate specific employment goals and the tasks required to achieve these goals
- Identify needed education and skills training as well as areas of support that might be needed to access and maintain employment
- Career plans should be reviewed and updated periodically.

A CAREER PLAN MUST ALWAYS RELATE TO WHAT THE TENANT WANTS:

Ambitious aspirations are not unusual nor necessarily a problem. Often, in working toward what seems like an unrealistic goal, tenants will actually make progress toward employment. When ambitious, long-range goals are presented, it is often helpful to identify the steps or short-term objectives to be accomplished. Additionally, it is useful for the counselor to try to understand the range of motivations behind an individual's career goals.

SELF ASSESSMENT VOCATIONAL HISTORY & PREFERENCES

You are more likely to have a successful work experience if you find a job that matches your strengths, skills, abilities and interests. A self-assessment can be used to help you identify some of your interests, strengths and abilities. This document is designed to help you think about your prior work experiences, job skills you currently have, additional training you might need and other vocational preferences you may have. You may wish to discuss the following issues with your vocational counselor or case manager as you develop your self-assessment.

VOCATIONAL HISTORY

- Are you currently working? Are you satisfied with your job or are you looking to make a change?
- What are you interested in doing? What career goals do you have now, and have you had in the past?
- What are your prior work experiences? This includes full- and part-time, volunteer work, internships, etc.
- What were your likes and dislikes about your past employment experiences? Was there too much overtime, too much or too little supervision, etc.?
- What are your current job skills? What additional training might be needed to meet your employment goals (e.g., office skills training, food service preparation)?
- Do you have positive references from past employers? References are very important for future jobs.
- Do you have a consistent work history or are there large gaps between jobs? You will need to develop a response to explain any major employment gaps.
- Have you been able to resolve past conflicts with supervisors and co-workers in a positive way?

VOCATIONAL PREFERENCES

- Would you prefer to work full-time, part-time or on a temporary basis?
- What schedule would you prefer: 9–5, overnight, weekends, etc.?
- What benefits are most important to you? (medical, sick days, vacation time, etc.)
- What is your ability to accept and process criticism regarding job performance? Do you become upset if your supervisor questions your job performance or do you take what has been said in a positive way?
- What amount and type of supervision works best for you?
- Would you prefer to work independently (e.g., plumber) or as part of a team (e.g., maintenance crew)?
- Would you like to work for a large company where there are many employees or do you feel more comfortable in a smaller environment?
- Would you prefer a more active (e.g., construction worker) or sedentary type of job (e.g., office work)?
- Do you prefer work that feels easy to do or would you rather feel challenged? Are you comfortable with on-the-job training or would you rather know how to do the job before you begin?
- Do you like working directly with people (e.g., customer service) or would you prefer a job that has limited or no interaction with customers?
- Do you prefer more formal or more casual work environments? How would you feel about wearing a uniform?

BENEFITS OF SUPPORTIVE EMPLOYMENT

- Tenants can practice interview skills and other job-based skills needed to obtain a job.
- Offers the opportunity to test employment skills in safe environment
- Provides opportunity to discover strengths and limitations
- Builds self-confidence and interpersonal skills
- Staff can monitor aptitude and performance.
- Allows for a jobs-first approach that is appealing to tenants.
- Other tenants benefit by getting a sense of their own potential in seeing neighbors working.
- Succeeding in a transitional position can make the difference with prospective employers who may be reluctant to hire individuals who have spotty employment backgrounds.
- Job development staff can attest to the employee's ability to perform.
- Can provide a process of advancement
- Many organizations have found tenants to be a valuable labor pool.

COMPETITIVE EMPLOYMENT

Locating employment opportunities is the domain of both tenants and staff.

WAYS TO HELP PEOPLE FIND COMPETITIVE EMPLOYMENT:

- Help with searching the want ads and "cold calling"
- Refer to employment programs
- Maintain job boards of current listings from want ads
- Help individual tenants to follow-up on specific job leads and searches
- Offer short-term funds related to finding a job
- Engage in job development efforts with employers, cultivating links with local businesses and retail chains
- Provide access to phones, fax and help with resume preparation and interviewing

Some organizations have developed industry-specific training programs which focus on developing a labor pool that is familiar with a specific industry and corporate cultures. These arrangements often allow programs to plan for specific types of job openings and to help orient trainees to a specific job market.

JOB INTERVIEW TIPS

An interview is a meeting between two or more people that is used to evaluate the extent to which an applicant's skills and experience meet a job's requirements. It is an opportunity to sell yourself and highlight the skills and abilities you can bring to the job. It is your chance to show how valuable you would be as an employee.

Job interviews make people anxious. Most people are afraid of being rejected or disappointed when they go on a job interview. You can learn how to master the art of job interviewing. Through preparation and practice, you can become more comfortable with the interview process. This document is designed to give you tips on how you can become more skillful and confident at job interviewing.

PREPARATION:

- It can be very helpful to do practice job interviews. Role-playing with a friend or a vocational worker and getting feedback on your performance can be helpful. Interviewing is a skill. The more you practice, the more comfortable you will be.
- Bring a copy of your resume as well as any other materials that were requested. You should be familiar with your resume and be prepared to answer questions about your work experience and education.
- Know the name and the position of the person you will be meeting.
- Arrive on time for the interview. Know exactly where you are supposed to go, how to get there and how long it will take to get there.
- Learn as much as possible beforehand about the company you are interviewing with. Ways to obtain this information include talking with current employees, obtaining a job description from the company's human resources department or using the library or internet.

THE INTERVIEW:

- Ask job-related questions to indicate your interest in the position: Who would be my direct supervisor? What are the responsibilities of the position? Can you describe a typical day?
- Make sure that you are dressed appropriately, make good eye contact, and greet the interviewer in a friendly manner with a firm handshake.
- Do not speak negatively about your present or former supervisor.
- Do not ask about salary, vacation time and other benefits in the first interview.
- Do not smoke, chew gum or wear an excessive amount of perfume or cologne on an interview.
- Do not use the interviewer's first name unless you are told to do so.
- Always thank the interviewer for his/her time and find out when you can expect him/her to contact you or whether it would be appropriate to contact him/her about the position.

FOLLOW-UP:

- After the interview, write a brief follow-up letter thanking the interviewer for his/her time, and letting the interviewer know that you are still interested in the position.

HOW TO BE A SUCCESSFUL EMPLOYEE

Soft skills are the skills that all employees must have in order to succeed in the work place regardless of what type of job they have. Employers place great value on these skills. These skills are separate from the technical knowledge that you may need on the job. Listed below are some of the skills needed to be considered a successful employee in whatever field you choose to work.

ATTENDANCE: This is really important to employers. This means coming to work on time, coming on every day you are scheduled to work, giving notice for days off, calling in sick only when absolutely necessary and calling your supervisor if you are going to be late. You cannot be a successful employee if you do not come into work.

APPEARANCE: Maintain good hygiene and dress appropriately.

SUBSTANCE FREE: If you come to work intoxicated then you will not be able to perform your job. Employers will not tolerate substance abuse on the job or employees who are under the influence. It is usually grounds for dismissal.

STRESS MANAGEMENT: Learn to identify sources of stress both on and off the job. Build a network of supports for addressing stress. Do not take on more than you can handle.

INTERPERSONAL SKILLS: It is important to be respectful and courteous with co-workers and customers. Express yourself clearly, so that you will be understood.

WILLINGNESS TO LEARN AND INITIATE: A way to demonstrate this is to ask a lot of questions at the beginning of a job. People usually don't mind this if you are new. Do tasks willingly and completely. Take interest in what you're doing. Pay attention when you are learning new tasks and take notes, if necessary. Accept constructive criticism.

CONFLICT-RESOLUTION SKILLS: This means you are willing to negotiate to help resolve differences of opinion and interests in a positive way.

ORGANIZATION AND NEATNESS: This will help you to keep organized in a new environment.

FLEXIBILITY: There are times when you may be asked to work on special projects or fill in for absent employees. Accept these tasks willingly and positively.

INTEGRITY/HONESTY: Choose the ethical course of action.

RESPONSIBILITY: Work hard toward reaching a goal.

PROBLEM-SOLVING SKILLS: Identify problem, evaluate all possible solutions, both positive and negative, select course of action, evaluate the outcomes.

ON-GOING JOB SUPPORT

When people are working, they may need assistance in managing and retaining their positions. In many cases, on-going job support will be an extension of the vocational supports and services that were provided early in the vocational counseling process. Sometimes, an issue that required individualized attention will continue to pose a problem after the person is employed.

Because of time constraints, offering assistance over the telephone can be an efficient and effective way to provide needed support. Some programs use on-site Job Coaches who become familiar with individual work locations and are available, if needed, to come on the job site to observe and coach participants. Other programs run workshops to reach a larger number of people.

POSSIBLE WORKSHOP TOPICS

- Entering or Re-Entering the Work Force
- Re-Evaluating Career Goals
- Managing a Disability in the Work Place
- Managing Supervisor and Co-Worker Relationships
- Time Management
- Conflict Resolution
- Communication Skills
- Stress Management
- Developing Support Systems

In spite of thorough assessments and a lot of support, people will have setbacks, experience problems in the workplace and will sometimes lose jobs. Staff should prepare people for these possibilities and use these experiences as learning opportunities.

PROGRAM GOALS AND EXPECTATIONS

An employment program needs to fit with the overall design of the housing and services program. Expectations of tenants and program participants, direct service staff and program administrators should be clear and reasonable, and based on the belief that people can and will succeed at work. A lack of such expectations can lead to confusion, frustration and ultimately undermine the effectiveness of employment programming.

SOME KEY POINTS:

- Program goals should be achievable, realistic and appropriate for the populations served.
- While full-time employment is a desirable goal, programs should establish and track other outcomes, such as increasing hours and income and transitions through the employment continuum.
- Clear intake and assessment procedures should ensure a match between the tenant's needs, expectations and program services.
- Participant requirements need to be clear. (e.g., does the person need to be compliant with treatment in order to participate in the program or is that irrelevant as long as they are effectively meeting the demands of the jobs program)
- The role of staff should be clear.
- Input and suggestions from participants should be implemented into the program.
- Experiences in the program should build skills, confidence and a sense of progress toward career plans.
- Flexible outcomes, where possible, should be part of the goals. People with special needs may vary greatly in their ability and desire to achieve full-time employment.
- Programs should have clear and enforceable rules.
- Benchmarks and objectives should be able to be acknowledged.
- It is critical to identify sources for jobs that tenants will want and will be able to do.

CREATING A CULTURE THAT PROMOTES WORK

The creation of a culture that promotes work begins with an environment in which employment is encouraged and expected. This is accomplished by establishing values and promoting behavioral norms that underscore the importance of working.

STRATEGIES TO ESTABLISH THIS CULTURE

- Engage tenants in an employment focus early in the process by inquiring about employment goals at the time of the initial intake interview
- Integrate employment into all documentation, such as service/treatment plans
- Have peers speak to the community about employment
- Prioritize applications for funding of employment services
- Open appropriate staff positions to tenants and develop transitional employment and training slots
- Ensure that the staff person responsible for the overall employment program is seasoned and has relevant experience
- Ensure that the employment program receives sufficient status in the organization's structure and hierarchy
- Arrange for an income mix among the tenancy to include low-income working people who can be role models and motivators for others thinking about going to work
- Arrange staff schedules to accommodate tenants who work during the day
- Make resources, such as computers, telephones, fax lines, desks, and transportation and clothing funds available to those who are seeking employment
- Make optimum use of physical space to enhance an emphasis on employment, such as providing a comfortable location for conducting job searches and having a section of an in-house library devoted to employment related materials
- Celebrate employment-related milestones such as graduations and promotions

STAFF ROLES AND TITLES

STAFF PROVIDES HELP AND SUPPORT IN THE FOLLOWING AREAS:

- Generating and sustaining the motivation to become employed
- Assessment
- Intake
- Creating a positive culture
- Developing skills
- Running employment-related groups
- Assisting in developing a resume and/or completing job applications
- Educating on ADA issues
- Offering pre-and post-employment support groups
- Developing a career plan
- Arranging for educational opportunities
- Helping to arrange for child care
- Recognizing successes
- Supporting people through setbacks
- Networking
- Finding good referrals
- Finding jobs
- Job coaching

Employment programs can include a few or many different types of staff roles depending on the design and size of the initiative. In any design, good program communication, coordination and integration between staff is very important.

POSSIBLE STAFF POSITIONS INCLUDE:

- **Case Managers/Service Coordinators:** Responsible for the overall coordination of individual tenant services. The role includes scheduling medical and mental health appointments, obtaining benefits and medical insurance, and making referrals. Employment goals should be integrated into the service or treatment plan. Service staff are often most familiar with tenants' overall abilities and can help to identify life skills that will be transferable to the work place.

- **Vocational Counselors:** Responsible for working with program participants to develop a step-by-step vocational plan. Ideally, Vocational Counselors limit their information gathering and interventions to areas that directly impact employment. The Vocational Counselor works with the Case Manager to integrate the vocational plan into the general service plan. Vocational Counselors identify obstacles to maintaining employment and provide ongoing assistance in minimizing the negative impact of these obstacles to success.
- **Job Coaches:** Some programs use Job Coaches to provide on-the-job support to program participants. Coaches can assess how an individual is doing on the job in addition to providing immediate feedback, training, and assistance with the job.
- **Job Supervisors:** When sponsoring in-house training or employment positions, a Job Supervisor or “boss” is usually assigned to oversee completion of tasks. Someone who understands the job and the responsibilities of the employee usually fills the Job Supervisor role. This position is preferably not involved in counseling the employee on personal matters.
- **Job Developers:** Responsible for establishing relationships with businesses to help secure jobs for program participants. Job Developers also serve as liaisons between the program and the job site and address problems and issues that come up regarding specific placements.
- **Employment Director:** Responsible for overseeing the agency-wide development of employment activities, including vocational services, job training, employment opportunities, business planning and development, and corporate relationships. The Director may be responsible for fundraising, preparation of business plans, regulatory compliance, staff/tenant hiring, development of community support structures and project evaluation.

ENTITLEMENTS

MANAGING ENTITLEMENT ISSUES:

- Whenever possible, tenants should be referred to jobs that offer health insurance.
- Case managers can inform tenants about “Ticket to Work” and “Work Incentives Improvement Act” of 1999. This program assists Social Security beneficiaries obtain, regain and maintain gainful employment through use of a “ticket” system. For more information, contact your local Social Security Office or log onto www.ssa.gov.
- Case managers should offer support on this issue from the beginning of work with tenants.
- Advocacy should be provided.
- For in-house jobs, some organizations arrange to have jobs program participants covered by the agency’s employee health plan.
- Some states are developing “Medicaid Buy-In” programs in which people can purchase Medicaid benefits as their income increases above established eligibility levels.
- Hiring a sophisticated Entitlements Specialist who understands the impact of income on various public benefit programs and the processes for maintaining eligibility can be helpful.
- The employment program can provide on-going education about entitlement-related issues, including prior to the person having a job.
- Staff should help tenants calculate the affect of income on their benefits and monitor this in on-going meetings.
- Offer workshops on financial planning, tax preparation and retirement planning.

Many people have relied on public benefits for a long time, and potential changes in these arrangements can generate significant fear and anxiety. For some, the actual loss of these funds can be potentially disruptive and cause one to think about quitting. Conversely, having cash can be a trigger for relapse or binge spending.

AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT

(Excerpted and revised from the Technical Assistance Manual on the Employment Provisions (Title I) of the Americans with Disabilities Act, Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C., January 1992.)

An employer cannot discriminate against qualified applicants and employees on the basis of disability.

The ADA prohibits employment discrimination against "qualified individuals with disabilities." A qualified individual with a disability is:

"An individual with a disability who meets the skill, experience, education, and other job-related requirements of a position held or desired, and who, with or without reasonable accommodation, can perform the essential functions of a job."

The ADA definition of individual with a disability is very specific. A person with a "disability" is an individual who:

- has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more of his/her major life activities;
- has a record of such an impairment; or
- is regarded as having such an impairment

The ADA specifically states that certain individuals are not protected by its provisions. Such persons are:

Persons who currently use drugs illegally are not individuals with disabilities protected under the Act when an employer takes action because of their continued use of drugs. This includes people who use prescription drugs illegally as well as those who use illegal drugs.

However, people who have been rehabilitated and do not currently use drugs illegally, or who are in the process of completing a rehabilitation program, may be protected by the ADA.

Definition of Reasonable Accommodation:

Reasonable accommodation is a critical component of the ADA's assurance of nondiscrimination. Reasonable accommodation is any change in the work environment or in the way things are usually done that results in equal employment opportunity for an individual with a disability.

Some examples of reasonable accommodation include:

- making existing facilities used by employees readily accessible to, and usable by, an individual with a disability;
- job restructuring;
- modifying work schedules;
- reassignment to a vacant position;
- acquiring or modifying equipment or devices;
- adjusting or modifying examinations, training materials, or policies;
- providing qualified readers or interpreters

PRINCIPLES OF CONFIDENTIALITY

THE PURPOSE OF MAINTAINING TENANTS' CONFIDENTIALITY IS TO:

- Protect tenants' right to privacy
- Protect tenants from information being disclosed that could potentially be used against them
- Encourage tenants to establish trusting relationships with staff
- Protect other tenants in the community from becoming overwhelmed by too much information

All staff should facilitate a community that values and upholds the individuals' right to privacy by regularly reinforcing the importance of maintaining one another's confidentiality.

Information about a tenant should be shared with other staff members within your organization if it is required for them to do their jobs; namely, to protect a tenant's safety or to enhance their well being.

MANAGING ISSUES OF CONFIDENTIALITY:

- Within an organization, the level of disclosure among staff of clinical, and diagnostic information about tenants will vary as a function of program philosophies, structure and staffing patterns. It is helpful to have guidelines from the outset about information sharing.
- It is important that the career-planning process includes discussions about self-disclosure of personal information to colleagues and supervisors.
- In some cases, the Americans with Disabilities Act will apply, and people should be informed about the accommodations available and the best processes for obtaining these accommodations.
- One model for information sharing is that all "service" staff who have a "counseling" function (e.g., case managers, vocational counselors) could have access to clinical and diagnostic information, but "non-clinical" staff (such as job supervisors) would have only limited access as defined by the organization's policies.
- When information is to be shared beyond the organization, program participants usually need to sign a waiver of confidentiality. In all cases, individuals should know what information about them is being shared and with whom.

PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

- Broad access to jobs for people with disabilities remains limited. Many people with disabilities want to work but do not, due to stigmas, lack of encouragement, lack of training, fear of losing benefits, a pervasive public attitude that disabilities and employment are incompatible, and/or lack of needed workplace accommodations.
- Being able to offer flexible programming and access to a broad range of jobs, including transitional, supported, part-time and full-time work are optimal. Helping people to address gaps in work history is also important.
- The ADA protects people with disabilities and organizations need to be familiar with these laws.

MENTAL ILLNESS

- Mental illness can impact functioning in a variety of ways: cognitively, emotionally, interpersonally and behaviorally. In vocational planning, it is important to understand if an individual has particular difficulties as a function of his illness.
- The complicated rules around returning to work for SSI/SSDI recipients will usually require extra assistance to ensure income stability and the continuation of health insurance.

HIV/AIDS

- Individuals with HIV/AIDS run the gamut from those who have had extensive work histories and successful careers to people with very limited or no work experience.
- Due to improvements in medications and treatment, people are living longer, healthier lives and are often able to remain in their jobs or return to the work force.
- People may need to manage complex medication regimes on the job as well as keep doctor's appointments.
- Protease inhibitors and anti-viral drugs can cause side effects such as nausea, vomiting and severe exhaustion, making it difficult for some people to work regularly or at all.

- An increasing percentage of people also have substance use problems, and these issues can complicate the process of finding and keeping a job.
- It is important for the worker to obtain an accurate work history, and an understanding of an individual's current health status and prescribed treatments.
- There is still much stigma and fear associated with HIV/AIDS and careful thought should be given the issue of self-disclosure. However, many people with HIV/AIDS will be eligible for and require accommodation under the ADA. Similar to people with mental illness, continued health coverage is crucial.

ALCOHOL AND SUBSTANCE USE

- This is a common and perplexing barrier to employment for supportive housing tenants. It is also a common employee problem in the general work force. Repeated work problems due to substance abuse will usually result in termination in any type of work situation.
- For some people, work is effective in helping reduce substance use and avoid relapse. Substance abusers also frequently have intermittent work histories and a range of other skills that are transferable to the work place. Staff should be aware that for people in recovery, having money and stress or conflicts on the job can be triggers for relapse.
- In discussions with tenants, it is helpful to focus on the behaviors associated with substance use that are creating obstacles to employment and plan how to minimize these problems. The substance use in and of itself is not relevant to working, but how it affects performance is.
- It is important to remember that the general work force includes many people who are addicted to alcohol and/or substances. Many have learned to manage these addictions (albeit some better than others) and stay employed.

HOMELESSNESS

- Homelessness is not a special need but a life experience that may have a profound affect on a person.
- Understanding how individuals came to be homeless and the effects of homelessness on their lives is important in the vocational planning process. Some of the adaptive skills used to survive homelessness can be translated to success in employment.

SPECIAL NEEDS CASE STUDIES

INSTRUCTIONS: In your group, read your assigned case and discuss how you would handle the situation. Also consider if there are implications for developing policies and procedures and/or staff training.

1. Beth is an elderly, mentally ill woman who feels lonely and isolated. She approaches her counselor asking about work opportunities. She says she wants a full-time job to keep her busy and so she can meet new people. She says she was an art major but hasn't drawn in years.
2. Ted is a mentally ill man who recognizes signs that he might be headed for a psychiatric decompensation. He asks his boss for a 6 week leave of absence and it is denied. Ted has never told his boss that he has a mental illness.
3. At the age of 18, Meg was the envy of all her friends when she was invited to join the prestigious NYC Ballet Company. Meg never had another job after that as she suffered from a schizophrenic breakdown at the age of 19. Now at age 23 she is stable, housed after a long stay in a shelter, and interested in working. Meg has entered the employment program and she was happy to be placed quickly in a part time job sweeping the streets. After her first day at work the boss told her how happy he was with her work. Upon hearing this, Meg broke down sobbing.
4. Carlos is a tenant hired to work on the front desk in a supportive housing project on the 4 p.m.–12 midnight shift. Carlos usually begins drinking in mid-afternoon and continues into the evening. Naturally, when he is working, Carlos cannot drink or be under the influence. It is difficult for Carlos to avoid having a drink before he starts work and he finds himself getting anxious during his shift, wanting to have a drink and sometimes drinking on the job.

EMPLOYMENT BIBLIOGRAPHY

ADA Division, Equal Employment Opportunity Commission: "EEOC Enforcement Guidance on the Americans with Disabilities Act and Psychiatric Disabilities," Washington, DC: ADA Division, Office of Legal Counsel, Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, 1997

This enforcement guidance explains the EEOC interpretation of the application of Title I of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 to individuals with psychiatric disabilities. This guide is designed to facilitate the full enforcement of the ADA. Topics include: the definition of a psychiatric disability under the ADA; disclosure of a disability; requesting reasonable accommodation; selected types of reasonable accommodation; conduct, direct threat; and professional licensing.

Bennett, G.; Shane, P.; Tutunjian, B.; Perl, H.I.: "Job Training and Employment Services for Homeless Persons with Alcohol and Other Drug Problems," Rockville, MD: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 1992

This report summarizes the relevant research that connects the arenas of homelessness, alcohol and other drug abuse, and employment and job-training services. It draws on the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism and the Department of Labor demonstration projects as well as other programs to provide examples of innovative programs across the country that have made progress in meeting the challenge of serving this population.

Callahan, M.; Garner, J.: *Keys to the Workplace: Skills and Supports for People with Disabilities*. Paul H. Brookes Publishers, 1997

Offers an overview of skills and supports needed to search, acquire and sustain employment for persons with disabilities. Assists in planning for employment and building an individual foundation for skills and supports.

Camardese, M.B.; Youngman, D.: "H.O.P.E.: Education, Employment, and People Who are Homeless and Mentally Ill," *Psychiatric Rehabilitation Journal* 19(4): 46-56, 1996

The authors surveyed 100 volunteers who are homeless and have mental illness, using consumers as interviewers. Objectives were to initiate educational and vocational planning; to learn which services they perceive most useful; and to structure a model learn/work environment for consumer collaborators. Survey responses indicate significant interest in training for diverse and meaningful employment. Findings suggests that communication and social skills training, as well as technical skills training and efforts at facilitating sustained access to available services, deserve funding priority.

Carling, P.J.: "Creating Employment Opportunities, Return to Community" Chapter in *Building Support Systems for People with Psychiatric Disabilities*. The Guilford Press, 227–248, 1995

This chapter discusses how strategies for helping people with psychiatric disabilities to obtain meaningful work have changed in recent years. It describes how employment approaches that are based on integration and empowerment principles emphasize work assistance to a broad range of individuals with psychiatric disabilities.

Carter, C.; Izumo, G.: *The Career Tool Kit: Skills for Success*. Prentice Hall, 1997
Universal skills to enhance personal knowledge on employment as well as personalizing your talents, abilities, priorities in the work arena. Teaches skills in developing resumes, interviewing, working as a team and establishing effective work habits.

Center for Psychiatric Rehabilitation: "ADA and Reasonable Accommodations, Boston," Boston, MA: *Community Support and Network News*, 12(1), Summer/Fall 1997

This issue devoted to the ADA and reasonable workplace accommodations for people with psychiatric disabilities. Presents findings from a 1993 study that examined employment outcomes and characteristics of individuals receiving workplace accommodations through supported employment programs.

Fleischer, W.; Sherwood, K.: "The Next Wave: Employing People with Multiple Barriers to Work," Corporation for Supportive Housing, 2000

The Next Steps Jobs Initiative tested the premise that a range of employment services targeted to supportive housing tenants can help them access employment. It used supportive housing as the focal point for deploying a range of services to address the multiple barriers to employment that tenants face. It also capitalizes on the residential stability and sense of community that supportive housing offers.

Holzer, H.: "What Employers Want: Job Prospects for Less-Educated Workers," Russell Sage Foundation, 1999

First-hand information is drawn from surveys of over 3,000 employers in major metropolitan areas. Provides a wealth of data on what jobs are available to persons with limited education, the skills required and how they are filled. Outlines measures for improving your job marketability through training programs and research.

Houghton, T.: "Landlord, Service Provider... and Employer: Hiring and Promoting Tenants at Lakefront SRO," Corporation for Supportive Housing, 2000

This essay provides a close look at Lakefront SRO's program of in-house tenant employment, as a guide for other supportive housing programs that either hire their own tenants or might want to do so. The lessons of "Landlord, Service Provider... and Employer" are also of potential interest to affordable housing programs whose tenants could become valuable employees given sufficient encouragement, training and clear policies.

Howtown, L.: *Providing Employment Support for People with Long-Term Mental Illness*. Brookes Publishing: 1995

A well-developed handbook for designing, developing and implementing a supported employment program for people with long-term psychiatric disabilities. Filled with helpful checklists, tables, forms, and summations of groundbreaking research findings, this practical sourcebook also includes detailed discussions of specific psychiatric diagnoses, vocational assessments and career development, crisis intervention, interdisciplinary support models and more.

Parkhill, P.: "Vocationalizing the Homefront: Promising Practices in Place-Based Employment," Corporation for Supportive Housing, 2000

This report presents some of the best approaches to helping people with multiple barriers to employment get and keep jobs. Included are "lessons learned" from the Next Step Jobs Initiative, a three-year collaboration funded by the Rockefeller Foundation among supportive housing providers in New York, Illinois and California and SCH designed to maximize tenant employment opportunities.

Internet Sites

AIDSline: National Library of Medicine

<http://www.aegis.com/pubs/aidsline>

AIDSline covers a huge number of articles published by the National Library of Medicine. Articles in both 1999 and 2000 are available concerning employment and HIV. A number of related articles are accessible through this website.

American Psychiatric Publishing, Incorporated

<http://www.appi.org>

The American Psychiatric Publishing, Inc. (APPI) is the leading publisher of books, journals and other media-related materials to psychiatric and mental health providers. APPI publishes professional books, books for the general public, journals, CD-ROM multimedia products, audiotapes and videotapes. Various studies are available to be read on this site, including "Adding a Vocational Focus to Mental Health Rehabilitation."

Center for Urban Community Services

<http://www.cucs.org>

Center for Urban Community Services (CUCS) provides a continuum of supportive services for homeless and formerly homeless people, including street outreach, a drop-in center, transitional and permanent housing programs, and vocational and educational programs. Particular emphasis is placed on specialized services for people with mental illness, HIV/AIDS and chemical dependency. This website provides information and links to a variety of resources regarding transitional and permanent housing.

Center for Psychiatric Rehabilitation

<http://web.bu.edu/SARPSYCH>

Describes research, training and service activities at the Center for Psychiatric Rehabilitation, including research and demonstration, training and consultation, services, publications and technology, and faculty listings. Collaborating organizations and psychosocial rehabilitation related to links are also provided.

Corporation for Supportive Housing

<http://www.csh.org>

CSH's mission is to help communities create permanent housing with services to prevent and end homelessness. CSH works through collaborations with private, nonprofit and government partners, and strives to address the needs of tenants of supportive housing. CSH's website includes a Resource Library with downloadable reports, studies, guides and manuals aimed at developing new and better supportive housing; policy and advocacy updates; and a calendar of events.

Handling Your Psychiatric Disability in Work and School

<http://www.bu.edu.sarpsych/jobschool>

This website is an interactive and informative page designed for persons with mental illness that addresses issues and reasonable accommodations related to work and school.

National Alliance to End Homelessness (NAEH)

<http://www.naeh.org>

The National Alliance to End Homelessness (NAEH), a nationwide federation of public, private and nonprofit organizations, demonstrates that homelessness can be ended. NAEH offers key facts on homelessness, affordable housing, best practice and profiles, publications and resources, fact sheets and comprehensive links to national organizations and government agencies that address homelessness.

National Clearinghouse on Alcohol and Drug Information (NCADI)

<http://www.health.org>

This site provides up-to-date information about new NCADI publications and campaigns. It also lists resources and referrals for those overcoming substance abuse problems. Research, surveys and statistical data, as well as forums, databases and an online calendar are available.

National Coalition for the Homeless

<http://www.nationalhomeless.org>

The National Coalition for the Homeless, a national nonprofit organization, has a mission to end homelessness. NCH focuses their work in the areas of housing justice, economic justice, health care justice and civil rights. A number of publications are available through this site, including "Employment and Homelessness: NCH Fact Sheet #4."

National Partnership for Reinventing Government: Federal Welfare to Work

<http://www.npr.gov/welfare.html>

This website updates the Federal Welfare-to-Work Hiring Initiatives and allows linkages to a variety of federal websites regarding legislation, information and employment programs.

National Resource Center on Homelessness and Mental Illness

<http://www.prainc.com/nrc/>

The National Resource Center on Homelessness and Mental Illness provides technical assistance, identifies and synthesizes knowledge, and disseminates information. Users can be linked to findings from Federal demonstration and Knowledge Development and Application (KDA) projects, research on homelessness and mental illness, and information on federal projects.

New York City Voices

<http://www.newyorkcityvoices.com>

New York City Voices: A Consumer Journal for Mental Health Advocacy is statewide in circulation and reporting. It is a journal where mental health consumers, ex-patients/survivors, family members and professional helpers can let their voices be heard. Archives include various articles on employment and self-sufficiency.

Social Security Online

<http://www.ssa.gov>

This web-site provides information about the impact of employment on benefits and can answer a number of employment-related questions. It can also answer questions about current Social Security benefits and the Ticket to Work Program.

U.S. Department of Labor

<http://www.dol.gov/>

The U.S. Department of Labor is charged with preparing the American workforce for new and better jobs, and ensuring the adequacy of America's workplaces. Information includes protecting worker's wages, health and safety, employment and pension rights; promoting equal employment opportunity; administering job training, unemployment insurance and workers' compensation programs; strengthening free collective bargaining; and collecting, analyzing and publishing labor and economic statistics.

U.S. Department of Labor: Bureau of Labor Statistics

<http://stats.bls.gov/bls/home.htm>

This website informs visitors of a variety of topics related to employment, including average earnings, wages by area and occupation, career guides, worker safety and health and statistics on inflation and spending. Online magazines and publications regarding employment and assistance are available.

U.S. Department of Labor: Welfare to Work

<http://wtw.doleta.gov/>

This Welfare to Work Highlights website is an interactive site designed for persons interested in the Welfare to Work programs. Persons interested in finding information about adult and youth programs can link to information pages. This site has a library of materials including links to related sites.

Welfare to Work Home Page

<http://www.labor.state.ny.us/>

The Welfare to Work Home Page offers visitors an opportunity to find out what's new in Welfare-to-Work initiatives, acquire applications and gather information about the Department of Labor.